



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

April 2, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents and
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Linda Forward *Linda Forward*
Interim Deputy Superintendent
Education Services

SUBJECT: Process for Approving Grade 6-12 Seat Time Waivers
in the 2015-16 School Year

Section 101(9), of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1701[9]), permits the State Superintendent to waive the minimum number of hours and days of pupil instruction for Alternative Education programs or other innovative programs approved by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The State Superintendent will consider applications for Seat Time Waivers for School Year 2015-2016, Grades 6-12. **A waiver (by district or ISD) that was granted for the 2011-2012 fiscal year or a subsequent fiscal year remains in effect unless it is revoked by the Superintendent. Districts with such need not reapply, but will be responsible for all associated reporting.**

Applications will be reviewed with consideration given to data reported by districts to the MDE, and waivers will be considered based on compliance with the reporting requirements and the data presented in the 2014-15 end of year report (due July 14, 2015), which can be found at:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/15RZdeXxtrQa2M5DvORUxgIRLQNSdw00HfzhdRGlhYkE/viewform>.

Any district that was approved by the MDE for a Grade 6-12 STW in 2011-12 or a subsequent year must complete the report. Failure to submit the required reports, including the 2014-15 year-end report will result in revocation of the Seat Time Waiver for the 2015-16 school year. New applicants will be considered based on a review of the application and implementation plan.

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The parameters of the 2015-2016 Grade 6-12 Seat Time Waiver Program include:

1. Each public school district, public school academy (PSA), and intermediate school district (ISD) **must apply individually to the MDE for approval to run a Seat Time Waiver Program.** The Seat Time Waiver Application must be completed and submitted to the MDE along with any additional information requested by the Department. It should be noted that this is an optional program and carries additional requirements set forth in the 5-O-B guidance. Failure to comply with the 5-O-B guidance, including non-participation in program research and evaluation, may result in the termination of a district's entire Seat Time Waiver Program. Each entity approved for a Grade 6-12 STW must also abide by all other applicable sections of the Pupil Accounting Manual.
 - While the application process will remain open year-round, **districts seeking to operate Seat Time Waiver Programs during School Year 2015-2016 must apply to the MDE no later than September 11, 2015,** to ensure approval of applications in time for the Fall 2015 Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) count day.
2. Districts may apply to operate any and all of three types of programs:
 - An ISD-led Seat Time Waiver Consortium Program
(Each district must have local board approval as identified in the application.)
 - Individual district-designed and operated Seat Time Waiver Program
 - Blended Learning Option (Described in #4)
3. Districts approved to operate a Seat Time Waiver Program may enroll a maximum of **25 percent of their enrolled student population, Grades 6-12,** in instructional programs that use online learning to deliver up to 100 percent of the pupil's instruction. It is recognized that districts may choose to utilize other means and methods for facilitating instruction, such as experiential and work-based learning. In these cases, districts must explain the unique approach in the individual implementation plans accompanying the district application.
4. Districts approved to operate a Blended Learning Option under its Seat Time Waiver Program may enroll **100 percent of its enrolled student population, Grades 6-12, in blended instructional programs.** In this case, blended instruction is the practice of combining frequent face-to-face interaction with online learning to deliver the pupil's instruction. The Blended Learning Option will allow districts to use online learning to deliver **up to 50 percent of the pupil's instruction.**
5. An ISD-chartered PSA approved to operate a Seat Time Waiver Program may enroll **100 percent of its enrolled student population, Grades 6-12, in blended instructional programs.** For the purposes of seat time waivers, blended instruction is the practice of combining frequent face-to-face interaction with online learning to deliver the pupil's instruction. Enrollment in this type of waiver program is limited to **10 percent of the ISD region's combined Grades 6-12 student population.**

* In the case where the ISD has chartered multiple PSAs, the combined enrollment of ISD-PSAs under this provision cannot exceed 10 percent of the ISD region's combined Grades 6-12 student population. The ISD shall determine which ISD-PSAs can enroll students in the program and how many students they may enroll.

Please send completed applications and materials to stwapp@michigan.gov as attachments.

The 2015-16 seat time waiver application & required report for 2014-2015 are posted at <http://www.techplan.org/seat-time-waivers/>.

We highly recommend that you allow your ISD Pupil Accounting auditor to review any new programs to ensure that all 5-O-B requirements will be met. Please call the Office of Education Improvement and Innovation if you have further questions at 517-241-4285.

For additional questions, please contact the following MDE staff by email:

Brian Barber (Programmatic and Application Questions): barberb2@michigan.gov
Eric Lipinski (Application and Technical Questions): lipinskie@michigan.gov

cc: Michigan Education Alliance